



State of Connecticut

SENATE

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TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am State Senator Michael McLachlan, and I am here to speak in support of Senate Bill 1054, *An Act Concerning the Disclosure of Autopsy Results*. This bill would allow the parents of a child who is the victim of homicide to request that their autopsy results not be publicly disclosed.

I was prompted to introduce this bill following the trial of Stephen Hayes, one of the two assailants in the 2007 Cheshire home invasion. During the trial, the autopsy results of two homicide victims, Hayley and Michaela Petit, who were under the age of eighteen at the time of their deaths, was released into the press. Considering the already sensitive and horrific nature of the crimes, releasing this information caused a greater amount of pain and suffering for their family.

As legislators we have a duty to protect the most vulnerable members of our society, such as our children. We emphasize that duty when we pass laws regulating speed limits in school zones, mandating vaccinations at certain ages, placing safeguards on certain website content, mandating coaches go through proper training in order to prevent injuries on the sports field, in addition to many others.

Currently, parents have rights regarding the medical records of their children. They are able to release those records or keep them private. Autopsies by definition are medical procedures done by specially trained medical professionals. With this, the same rights should apply to autopsy results as they do to medical records. This bill would simply grant parents the right to protect information about their children.

I am also of the belief that it is as much our responsibility to protect the life of a child even after they have physically stopped living it. We have a responsibility to protect the memory of the child. After the end of physical life, we want to celebrate the beauty that was their time on Earth. We want to cherish their smile, their accomplishments, their favorite moments, and our favorite moments with them.

What happened to Hayley and Michaela is a disturbing glimpse into true evil. Sadly, our society perpetuated that evil when we allowed the press to put their autopsy results on the front pages of our newspapers, opening screens on our internet home pages, and on replay during our daily news broadcasts.

Although, we can not right the wrongs that were done to the Petit family, we can protect against them happening to anyone else. In order to protect Connecticut's children, our children, both during this life and after its physical end, I strongly urge the committee to support Senate Bill 1054.

Thank you,

Michael A. McLachlan
State Senator – 24th District